

Appendix H

KREMMLING FIELD OFFICE WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS ASSESSMENT

October 7, 2009

Prepared by:

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office

Name	Resources Represented
Andy Windsor	Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Lands with Wilderness Characteristics outside Existing WSAs, Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs), Visual Resource Management (VRM), and Recreation and Visitor Resources
Paula Belcher	Water Resources
Bill Wyatt	Cultural Resources
Susan Cassel	Lands and Realty Program
Richard Johnson	Range Management (Livestock Grazing)
Megan McGuire	Fish and Wildlife Resources
Tom Adamson	Forestry Resources
Frank Rupp	Cultural Resources and Paleontological Resources
John Monkouski	Recreation and Travel Management
Sue Valente	Geographic Information System (GIS)
Kelly Hodgson	Energy and Minerals
Dennis Gale	DRMP/DEIS Project Manager

Introduction

Land Use Planning Process

As part of the land use planning process, the BLM is considering all available information in order to determine the mix of resource use and protections that best serves the multiple-use and sustained-yield mandates of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The BLM has the authority under the FLPMA to maintain inventories of all public lands, and their associated resources, including wilderness characteristics, and to consider such information during the land use planning process.

As part of this wilderness characteristics assessment, the Kremmling Field Office (KFO) is meeting its obligations for updating and maintaining its inventory of wilderness resources, in accordance with Section 102, Section 201, and Section 202 of the FLPMA. The BLM's 1601-1-

Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), identifies broad-scale decisions that guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions (BLM 2005a). Specifically, BLM Handbook 1610-1 (Appendix C, Part K), Wilderness Characteristics, directs Field Offices to identify decisions in order to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation).

As part of the planning process for this DRMP/DEIS, the KFO is analyzing which portions of BLM-managed public lands with wilderness characteristics would be protected or preserved through management prescriptions, stipulations, and allowable uses (see Management and Setting Prescriptions for Wilderness Characteristics at the end of this Appendix). The KFO is also analyzing potential impacts of land management decisions on lands with wilderness characteristics.

Scope of Assessment

This assessment is intended to provide an evaluation of wilderness characteristics on BLM-managed public lands within the Planning Area that are outside of existing WSAs. This process is considering all BLM-managed public lands in order to: 1) update data and ensure that environmental impacts associated with the 4 proposed alternatives on public lands with wilderness characteristics are adequately analyzed; and 2) address proposals from the public to inventory and protect public lands with wilderness characteristics.

For the purpose of this assessment, all lands underwent a review regarding whether or not the areas are roadless. (The term “roadless” refers to the absence of roads that have been improved and maintained by mechanical means in order to ensure relatively regular and continuous use.) The BLM reviewed externally submitted wilderness proposals, BLM records, and other information on area routes in order to determine which areas within the Planning Area are roadless. The findings of this review are documented under the “Findings” section for those individual units (see below).

Proposals involving lands entirely within existing WSAs were not assessed for wilderness characteristics. Only BLM-managed public lands outside of, or adjacent to, WSAs were within the scope of this assessment. This assessment does not include National Forest System lands; and there are no BLM-managed public lands adjacent to existing USFS-designated Wilderness Areas within the Planning Area. The existing 3 designated WSAs (the North Sand Hills Natural Area WSA, the Platte River Contiguous WSA, and the Troublesome WSA) will continue to be managed in order to protect their wilderness characteristics, in accordance with the BLM’s Interim Management Policy For Lands Under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1; BLM 1995) until Congress designates them as Wilderness or releases them for other uses. If these existing WSAs are released, they will be managed under the prescriptions specified in the Approved RMP (Approved Plan).

Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

This assessment addresses the following question

Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?

More specifically,

- **Size** -- Does the area have at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?
- **Naturalness** -- Do the lands and resources exhibit a high degree of naturalness? Are the lands affected primarily by the forces of nature? Is the imprint of human activity substantially noticeable? (NOTE: An area's naturalness may be influenced by the presence or absence of roads and trails, fences or other developments; the nature and extent of landscape modifications; the presence of native vegetation communities; and the connectivity of habitats. Wildlife species are recognized as an indicator of naturalness.)
- **Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive and Unconfined Types of Recreation** -- Do visitors have outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation? Are the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people rare or infrequent? Can visitors feel isolated, alone, or secluded from others? Is the use of the area primarily through non-motorized or non-mechanical means with no, or minimal, recreation facilities?

Review of Previous Wilderness Inventories

The BLM reviewed the original BLM Wilderness Inventory Reports, and the associated maps, from 1979 and 1980 (BLM 1980). This review enabled the BLM to determine if there is any new information that was not considered as part of the original inventories, or if there is any new information that has emerged since that timeframe. Opinions as to what constitutes solitude and outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation change as the larger landscape experiences more development and more people. There also has been an increase in interest in looking at natural systems and features found in lower-elevation environments, and in expanding the diversity of the wilderness preservation system. Therefore, some information submitted by the public was considered "new information" based upon changed physical conditions, diversity within the wilderness preservation system, and changed social perceptions of wilderness characteristics that have occurred over time.

Review of Public Wilderness Proposals

Numerous external groups have varying interests in wilderness characteristics, and have advocated wilderness designations through legislation as well as through participation in the land use planning processes. Proposal areas and acreage figures have changed over time. This assessment includes consideration of the most recent proposal submitted to the BLM for

consideration of protection of wilderness characteristics. The most recent proposal was submitted to the BLM, in May of 2007, by the Colorado Environmental Coalition (CEC), the Wilderness Society, American Rivers, Inc., the Center for Native Ecosystems, the Colorado Mountain Club, and the Wilderness Workshop. The proposal contains wilderness inventories completed by these groups on an area-by-area basis, with wilderness designation justifications and a Statewide wilderness proposal. (Earlier submissions were received from the CEC in 1994, 2000, and 2001.)

Specific Documents and Data Used for the Assessment

Specific documents and data used for this assessment include:

- written proposal and boundary shape files from the CEC (May 5, 2007);
- KFO range improvement and range allotment files;
- KFO Transportation Inventory GIS data (2002 to 2011);
- Natural Diversity Information Source (NDIS) GIS data from the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW) (December of 2006);
- Level 1 Element Occurrence Records (EOR) GIS point data from the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) (September of 2006);
- aerial photos from the National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP);
- KFO Cultural Resources Class I Overview, cultural base maps and files;
- KFO road maintenance records;
- BLM's LR 2000 Database for rights-of-way (ROWs), mineral claims, oil and gas leasing, etc.;
- field investigations from the Craig District (White River, Kremmling, and Little Snake Resource Areas) Final Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 1990); and
- KFO Recreation Setting Character Condition (RSCC) maps.

This assessment documents all identified valid existing rights (such as water rights), grandfathered uses (such as the Rabbits Ears Creek Irrigation Ditch), and public land investments. Field reviews, except those for the Yarmony Mountain Assessment Area (see below), were conducted in September of 2009.

Areas Considered for Assessment

Table H-1 shows all the areas within the Planning Area that were considered as part of this assessment.

Table H-1 Assessment Areas			
Name	Public Wilderness Proposal Acreage*	Acres in Existing WSAs	Acres Analyzed
Troublesome	11,771	8,158	3,613
Drowsy Water	0	0	7,508
Strawberry	0	0	5,834
Yarmony Mountain	0	0	0

* Reflects total BLM acreage that was submitted by the CEC (January, 30, 2008); reflects the 2007 public wilderness proposal, and includes acreage within existing BLM WSAs. Acreage figures within GIS mapping can vary due to rounding errors and different mapping techniques.

Areas Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Evaluation

Of the areas considered, the Yarmony Mountain area is the only area that was dropped from detailed evaluation. The 1980 Intensive Inventory findings are still relevant for this area. At the time, the original inventory identified 12 miles of routes within the area. There are now 57 miles of routes within the area. Since the original inventory, ROWs have been granted on several of these routes. The original inventory found the area's naturalness was significantly impacted by the presence of the routes. The increase in the number and miles of routes in the area has further impacted the area's naturalness. In addition, the original inventory found that opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation were impacted by the presence of the routes. Given the five-fold increase in route proliferation, the opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are even more impacted today.

The following sections describe the analysis for the Troublesome, Drowsy Water, and Strawberry areas.



Wilderness Characteristic Assessment

Area 1 - Troublesome

Area Description

The Troublesome assessment area is located in Grand County, approximately 20 miles north of Kremmling. The assessed area is on the south slope of the Park Range, and is bounded by private lands on the west and on the south. National Forest System lands administered by the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest border the area on the east and on the north. Reports from external proponents suggest the larger proposed area “provides an intact forested bridge between Rocky Mountain National Park and the wilderness areas of the Park Range, which preserves the ability of far-ranging species to migrate and disperse” (CWP 2001)

Background

The area assessed in this Appendix was included as part of the BLM’s Initial Wilderness Inventory process conducted in 1979, and as part of the Intensive Wilderness Inventory process conducted in 1980 (BLM 1980). The Final Initial Inventory Decision (August 31, 1979) identified 11,771 acres to be intensively inventoried. Following the intensive inventory field work, approximately 8,158 acres were established as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (BLM 1980). The remaining 3,613 acres were not designated as a WSA. (The rationale for excluding these acres from the WSA was the impact to naturalness caused by the boundary roads on the west and on the south side of the WSA. The western boundary road of the WSA provides access to irrigation improvements; the southern boundary road of the WSA provides access to a private inholding and to a reservoir on adjacent National Forest System lands.)

National Forest System lands adjacent to the assessed area were inventoried as part of the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II). The 1997 Routt National Forest Plan did not recommend the inventoried roadless acres for wilderness designation. The roadless acres have been included in the Draft Colorado Roadless Rule EIS for submission, along with other Colorado roadless areas, to the Secretary of Agriculture.

Landscape Characteristics and Issues

Land Ownership and Acreage

The Troublesome WSA includes 8,158 acres of contiguous public land with a private inholding of 625 acres (located in the southern portion of the area). The area identified in the external wilderness proposal outside of the WSA is an additional 3,613 acres of BLM-managed public lands on the west and on the south of the existing WSA. Of this 3,613 acres, 522 acres were dropped from this assessment due to the impact of a road along the western boundary of the WSA (which continues to be used in order to access range improvements, as well as for

maintenance of the Rabbit Ears Creek Irrigation Ditch); and 746 acres were dropped due to motorized impacts from the Bighorn Subdivision (located in the southern portion of the area). Both of these impacts affect the naturalness and opportunity for solitude in these areas.

Topography

The Troublesome assessment area represents rugged, mountainous terrain varying in elevation from 8,000 feet to 10,800 feet. The terrain consists of gentle, rolling foothills in the lower elevations, which give way to steep drainages and high, prominent ridges at higher elevations.

Vegetation

Most of the assessment area is forested with lodgepole pine, spruce, fir, and aspen. Vegetative variety is enhanced by the riparian habitat along the streams.

Existing Issues

The entire Troublesome area is difficult for the public to access. Private property blocks access on the south and west sides of the area, and there are no public access roads through the adjacent National Forest System lands to reach the north and east sides of the area. As a result, the area experiences very little visitation. The area is primarily used by the grazing permittees during the grazing season, and by big game hunters during the fall hunting seasons. A temporary travel closure was implemented in 2006 in order to address resource damage resulting from OHV use by adjacent landowners and big game hunters (who have access through private lands). The BLM has limited access through private lands, and, as a result, monitoring and enforcement in the area has been challenging.

The current mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic has impacted the lodgepole pine in the Troublesome area. BLM estimates suggest that 75 percent to 80 percent of the lodgepole pine within the assessment area are either dead, or will die, as a result of the epidemic.

Current Management Allocations/Prescriptions

Travel

The 1984 KFO RMP (BLM 1984b) travel management decisions designated the BLM-managed public lands outside the Troublesome WSA as Open to cross-country travel. However, the area is currently Closed to all motorized travel under the 2006 Temporary Closure Order, and will remain closed until travel management decisions are completed in conjunction with the completion of the DRMP/DEIS.

Visual Resource Management

The 1984 KFO RMP (BLM 1984b) did not designate Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes. Visual resources have been managed in a manner designed to protect the Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) adopted as part of the 1984 RMP. As part of this DRMP/DEIS planning process, the VRI has been updated. All of the evaluated public lands within the Troublesome area have been inventoried as Visual Resource Inventory Class II.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The 2007 Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report (BLM 2007c) that was prepared for the DRMP/DEIS included Rabbit Ears Creek, which borders the northern parcel that is evaluated in this assessment. The outstanding remarkable value (ORV) that was identified in the report consists of the geological features created as a result of volcanic activity.

Recreation Setting Character Conditions

The physical qualities of the landscape can be classified and mapped looking at a spectrum of Recreation Setting Character Conditions (RSCC) Classes based upon the distance from motorized and mechanized routes. Using the existing KFO GIS Transportation System data, the RSCC mapping shows 40 percent classified as back country; 36 percent classified as middle country; and the remaining 24 percent classified as front country.

Livestock Grazing

Currently, livestock grazing occurs on 2 allotments with 2 permittees. There are no known range improvements within the area.

Realty and ROWs

Currently, there is 1 perpetual ROW for an irrigation ditch (Rabbit Ears Creek) in the northern parcel. The ROW is 26-feet wide, and was excluded from the assessed area.

Oil and Gas Leasing

Currently, the assessment area is open to leasing. There are no active oil and gas leases within the assessment area. The entire northern parcel, and most of the southern parcel, are mapped as “low potential” for oil and gas. A small portion of the southern parcel is mapped as “no potential” for oil and gas.

Minerals

The assessment area is open to mineral entry.

Water and Water Rights

Currently, there do not appear to be any water rights or developments actually within either parcel in the assessment area. The Colorado Water Conservation Board has filed for an instream flow on Rabbit Ears Creek (which is still being decided by the Court).

Road Maintenance

Currently, there are no roads within the assessment area receiving ongoing maintenance.

Topographic Maps

USGS 1:24,000 series topographic maps: Hyannis Peak, Gunsight Pass

Findings for Troublesome

Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?

Yes.

Size

Does the area have at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

Yes.

The Troublesome Additions area contains wilderness characteristics on 2,345 acres of the 3,613 acres in the citizens' wilderness proposal. When combined with the existing, contiguous WSA, the size characteristic is met and is of sufficient size to make practicable the protection of wilderness characteristics. The Troublesome Additions areas has limited public access due to difficult topography, being surrounded by private lands, and being contiguous with a national forest roadless area.

The remaining 1,268 acres were determined to not have wilderness characteristics as a result of the following:

- In the western portion, a 522-acre area contains a road that serves as the boundary road on the west side of the WSA. This road is used by a range permittee (in conjunction with his grazing operation). In addition, the road used to access an isolated parcel of private land, and it is used to access the Rabbit Ears Creek Ditch (which is a perpetual ROW);
- In the southern portion of the assessed area, a 746-acre area east and west of the Bighorn Subdivision has impacts to naturalness and solitude. The BLM-managed public lands in this area are on ridgelines where the subdivision and ranchlands are visible and dominate the viewshed.

Naturalness

Do the lands and resources exhibit a high degree of naturalness? Are the lands affected primarily by the forces of nature? Is the imprint of human activity substantially noticeable?

Yes.

The Troublesome assessment area has retained a natural landscape. The steep nature of the topography, and the limited access to the area, has limited impacts resulting from human activity. There are no known range improvements within the area. There is 1 route in the southern portion of the area, which extends off of private land in the Bighorn Subdivision. The

route has evidence of construction (cut/fill); however, it has no known improvements; and has no record of maintenance. The BLM would not authorize maintenance on the route if it became impassable. The route is substantially unnoticeable. There is also an irrigation ditch (Rabbit Ears Creek) that was excluded from the northern portion of the area. There is no record or evidence, however, that the ditch has been maintained in several years. A visitor would have to be within 100 yards, or directly on the ditch, in order to notice it due to the dense forest canopy. As a result, the impact of the ditch to the area's naturalness has been determined to be substantially unnoticeable.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Outstanding Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Types of Recreation

Do visitors have outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation? Are the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people rare or infrequent? Can visitors feel isolated, alone or secluded from others? Is the use of the area primarily through non-motorized or non-mechanical means with no, or minimal, recreation facilities?

Yes.

As a result of the dense forest canopy, a visitor to the area is quickly isolated. There are no human-developed trails in the northwest parcel, so visitors navigate the area using game trails or by simply traveling cross-country. There is a developed horse trail in the southeast parcel that connects to the short route coming out of the Bighorn Subdivision. The trail eases navigation through the forest; however, there is limited travel on the trail. The forest buffers any human-created sound; therefore, even if a visitor is close to a boundary, there are few sounds of human activity. The limited access into the Troublesome area also enhances a visitor's opportunity for solitude. A visitor must have access through private lands, or must access the area through adjacent National Forest System lands.

In addition, the physical qualities of the landscape are important for producing opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The diverse topography and vegetation (consisting of aspen stands, and dense forests) have helped to maintain remoteness, and offer the visitor challenging and primitive recreational experiences including, but not limited to, hiking, horseback riding, and hunting.

Supplemental Values

Ecological

The Troublesome assessment area contains a portion of the Upper Troublesome Creek Potential Conservation Area (PCA), proposed by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) due to biodiversity significance. The CNHP also noted that the site provides other values, including aesthetic and recreational values. The northern addition area contains a designated "Significant Plant Community" of drummond willow, an aquatic sedge that is identified G2S2 under the CNHP Natural Community Classification System. (The classification of G2S2 means that the plant is considered imperiled globally, as well as within the State of Colorado.) The plant community occurs along Rabbit Ears Creek.

Cultural

Limited inventory has occurred in the assessment area. BLM Cultural Resource Inventory data shows 1 cultural resource site, which is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Wildlife

The Troublesome assessment area offers wildlife habitat for populations of elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, lynx, raptors, coyote; and a variety of small birds and other small animals.

The Troublesome assessment area encompasses mapped moose, mule deer, and elk summer range (defined by that part of the overall range where 90 percent of the individuals are located between spring green-up and the first heavy snowfall). The assessment area includes CDOW-mapped winter range for elk. The timbered portions of the assessment area also provide habitat for the Northern goshawk, a BLM Sensitive Species.

A portion of the assessment area is within mapped lynx potential habitat (defined as those areas having the highest potential of lynx occurrences).

Scenery

The area has been inventoried, and recognized, for its Class II scenery (which is to retain the existing character of the landscape). The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low.

Geological

The northern parcel has outstanding geological features created as a result of volcanic activity, which is also identified as the ORV identified in the 2007 Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report (BLM 2007c).



Wilderness Characteristic Assessment

Area 2 – Drowsy Water

Area Description

The Drowsy Water assessment area is located approximately 7 miles northeast of Hot Sulphur Springs, and 4 miles northwest of Granby. It includes lands north of U.S. Highway 40 to the BLM boundary with the Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest. Drowsy Water Creek, running north to south, bisects the assessment area.

Background

The assessment area was included as part of the BLM's Initial Wilderness Inventory process in 1979, and as part of the Intensive Wilderness Inventory process conducted in 1980 (BLM 1980). The original inventory evaluated 9,860 acres, and determined that the area did not qualify for wilderness study. The rationale for not carrying the area forward as a WSA was the impact that 14 miles of routes, and an abandoned irrigation ditch, had on the naturalness of the area.

Landscape Characteristics and Issues

Land Ownership and Acreage

The assessment area is 7,508 acres. The difference in size between the 1980 inventory and this inventory results from the use of different boundaries in order to define the assessment area. The 1980 inventory used the McQueary Creek Road as the western boundary. The current inventory uses a boundary line that excludes impacts resulting from historic timber management; impacts that were not identified in the original inventory (including old logging roads and clear-cut units) east of the McQueary Creek Road. The 1980 inventory unit defined the northern boundary as the boundary with National Forest System lands. The current inventory uses the same boundary, with one exception: the current inventory excludes the impacts resulting from historic timber management (located in T2N, R77W, Sections 5 and 6). The 1980 inventory used the boundary between BLM-managed public lands and private lands as the eastern and southern boundaries of the assessment area. The current inventory uses the road that follows Smith Creek, which connects Smith Creek with Drowsy Water Creek, as the southeastern boundary. All of the 7,508 acres are BLM-managed public lands.

Topography

The Drowsy Water assessment area exhibits a variety of topography, from rolling hills to steep slopes with flat mesa-like tops. The area ranges in elevation from 7,900 feet to 10,300 feet. (Some of the steeper slopes on the sides of these mesas rise 2,000 feet in less than 1 mile.)

Vegetation

The area has 3 different vegetation types. The southern sections on southwestern slopes contain sagebrush, and associated grasses and forbs. Stands of lodgepole pine intermixed with aspen stands occupy the higher elevations, and the north-to-northeast slopes. The third vegetation type within the assessment area is the riparian vegetation along Drowsy Water Creek and McQueary Creek.

Existing Issues

The Drowsy Water Creek assessment area, like the Troublesome assessment area, is difficult for the public to access. The main access roads into the area follow Drowsy Water Creek and Smith Creek from the south (off of U.S. Highway 40). The mouths of both creeks are privately owned; therefore, a visitor would need permission to cross private property in order to access the area. Visitors can access the area from the west, off of the McQueary Creek Road; and from the north, through National Forest System lands. There are 3 Outfitters permitted in the area (offering horseback trail riding). The single track routes that have evolved from the equestrian activity are now being used by motorcycles. Monitoring suggests that the motorized use has increased in recent years, as opportunities on adjacent National Forest System lands have been lost as the result of new travel restrictions. This increased use is creating conflicts between the motorized and non-motorized trail users. As more motorcycle riders use the area, new routes are being created. The other significant user-group in the area consists of big game hunters; with this use resulting in an increase of OHV use during the fall hunting seasons.

The current MPB epidemic has impacted the lodgepole pine within the area. BLM estimates suggest that 75 percent to 80 percent of the lodgepole pine in the assessment area are either dead, or will die as, a result of the epidemic.

Current Management Allocations/Prescriptions

Travel

The 1984 KFO RMP (BLM 1984b) designated the area as Open for cross-country motorized travel. Under the 1988 Travel Management Plan, the McQueary Creek Road is Closed seasonally (from Labor Day through June 1st).

Visual Resource Management

The 1984 KFO RMP (BLM 1984b) did not designate VRM Classes. Visual resources have been managed in order to protect the Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) adopted as part of the 1984 KFO RMP. As part of the planning process for this DRMP/DEIS, the VRI has been updated. The northern half of the area is inventoried as VRI Class II, and the southern half is inventoried as VRI Class IV.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no eligible WSR segments within the assessment area.

Recreation Activities and Recreation Setting Character Conditions

The physical qualities of the landscape can be classified and mapped looking at a spectrum of RSCC Classes based upon the distance from motorized and mechanized routes. Using the existing KFO GIS Transportation System data, the RSCC mapping shows 14 percent classified as back country; 65 percent classified as middle country; 19 percent classified as front country, and the remaining 2 percent classified as rural.

Livestock Grazing

Currently, livestock grazing occurs on 3 allotments. There are 2 developed springs in the assessment area. No other range improvements are known to exist.

Realty and ROWs

Currently, there are no ROWs within the assessment area.

Oil and Gas Leasing

Currently, the assessment area is open to leasing. There are no active leases within the area. The northwest two-thirds of the area are mapped as “low potential” for oil and gas, and the southeast one-third is mapped as “moderate potential.”

Minerals

The assessment area is open to mineral entry.

Water and Water Rights

Name	Water Case	Adjudicated Date	Appropriated Date	Decreed Amount	Decreed Uses	Comments
Drowsy Water Creek Instream Flow	86CW208	12/31/1986	3/14/1986	1 cfs	instream	
Lost Cow Spring	W0467 90CW0111	12/31/1971	4/17/1926	0.002 cfs	Livestock Domestic	Federal reserved water right
Mushroom Spring	82CW216 Amended 3 of 6	12/31/1982	9/30/1981	0.005 cfs	Livestock Wildlife	Developed spring

The Drowsy Water Creek Instream Flow contains BLM-managed segments of McQueary Creek, Drowsy Water Creek, and unnamed tributaries to Willow Creek and Smith Creek. The BLM has 2 decreed springs within the assessment area that help provide water and good livestock distribution. The Colorado Water Conservation Board has an instream flow decree on Drowsy Water Creek. The right is for the entire segment (headwaters to the Colorado River), and is for 1 cfs, year-round. (The right was decreed in Case No. 86CW208, Water Division 5.) Most of the private irrigation ditches are located downstream of BLM-managed public lands. There is an irrigation ditch that starts on BLM-managed public lands in Section 17 (approximate UTM: Easting 410669.91 m, Northing 4443347.07 m). The ditch travels the west side of Drowsy Water

Creek, and appears to irrigate meadows northwest, to west, of Drowsy Water Ranch. The ditch is not identified in the Colorado's Decision Support Systems (CDSS) records. There is a concrete structure in, or adjacent to, the creek that may be associated with the ditch. It appears, however, that there are no valid water rights on the ditch.

BLM's Lost Cow Spring (located in Section 17) is part of the Interlocutory Decree, which asserted a Federal reserved water right for the spring. It is unclear whether there are structures associated with the spring above the road, or whether, at the present time, the spring flows undeveloped near the road.

Mushroom Spring's source is located within the assessment area; however, a pipeline and trough are located outside of the assessment area (on the other side of the road).

Road Maintenance

There are no roads within the assessment area receiving ongoing maintenance.

Topographic Maps

USGS 1:24,000 series topographic maps: Hot Sulphur Springs, Cabin Creek

Findings for Drowsy Water

Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?

Yes.

Size

Does the area have at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

Yes.

The entire 7,508 acres within the Drowsy Water unit contain wilderness characteristics. Findings differ from the original inventories done in 1979, as the original inventories included acres with additional routes, which contributed to a finding that the area lacked naturalness. Reducing the size of the assessed area eliminated the Smith Creek route and the route that connects Smith Creek and Drowsy Water Creek. Additionally, sections of the route along Drowsy Water Creek were washed out during high spring runoff in the 1990s which has helped reduce the impact of the route to the area's naturalness.

Naturalness

Do the lands and resources exhibit a high degree of naturalness? Are the lands affected primarily by the forces of nature? Is the imprint of human activity substantially noticeable?

Yes.

The inventoried area is representative of the transition zone between the Colorado River Valley and the higher lodgepole pine forest. The topography includes rolling hills, steep slopes, and mesa tops. The vegetation transitions with elevation changes. The lower elevations are dominated by sagebrush with pockets of aspen in the drainages. The higher elevations are dominated by a lodgepole pine forest with pockets of spruce and fir on north facing slopes. Drowsy Water Creek and McQueary Creek flow through the assessment area.

Human Imprints

There are 2 developed springs for rangeland management within the assessment area (1 in T2N, R78, Section 13; and 1 in T2N, R77W, Section 17). These spring developments are not noticeable to the casual observer.

There is also an abandoned irrigation ditch (located in T2N, R77W, Section 17, Section 18, and Section 19). There is no ROW on the ditch. The ditch has a minor impact on the naturalness of the area. The ditch is visible from the way along Drowsy Water Creek; however, it does not substantially impact the naturalness of the area.

There is also an old cabin (located in T2N, R78W, Section 12). The cabin is in the lodgepole timber, several hundred yards from the route in the same section. The cabin is used by big game hunters during the fall hunting season. The presence of the cabin has a minor impact on the naturalness of the area.

There are 5 routes within the assessment area. These routes fit the description of a 'way,' as opposed to a 'road' because there are road-like features that may be used by 4-wheel vehicles. They do not, however, receive regular maintenance. All of the ways are used in order to access the interior of the area. The current impact to naturalness resulting from these ways is their width, and the evidence of motorized use. If a visitor is a short distance away from these ways, however, they would not notice them.

The condition of the route that was identified in 1980 (which follows Drowsy Water Creek) has changed since the original 1980 inventory. The beginning of the route has been washed out due to high flows in Drowsy Water Creek. This has reduced traffic on the route, and allowed it to return to a more natural state. The Smith Creek route identified in 1980 is not included in this inventory. As a result, the impacts to naturalness resulting from the routes identified as part of the 1980 inventory no longer exist.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Outstanding Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Types of Recreation

Do visitors have outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation? Are the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people rare or infrequent? Can visitors feel isolated, alone or secluded from others? Is the use of the area primarily through non-motorized or non-mechanical means with no, or minimal, recreation facilities?

Yes.

A visitor to the northern part of the assessment area would have outstanding opportunities for solitude (due to the dense forest cover). The opportunities for solitude are somewhat diminished in the southern part of the assessment area, due to the open sage slopes (visitors have a higher visibility due to the openness of the vegetation). Recent travel management decisions on the adjacent Arapahoe National Forest have restricted motorized travel to the northern boundary of the assessment area. The result has been that fewer visitors enter the area from the north. Most visitors are concentrated in the major drainages of Drowsy Water Creek and McQueary Creek, and along the mesa/ridge tops. A visitor traveling through the numerous side drainages to these creeks would find ample opportunities for solitude.

Physical qualities of the landscape are important to producing opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. The diverse topography and vegetation (consisting of aspen stands and dense forests) have helped to maintain remoteness; and offer the visitor challenging and primitive recreational experiences, including, but not limited to, hiking, horseback riding, and hunting.

Supplemental Values

Cultural

Limited inventory has occurred in the assessment area. BLM Cultural Resource Inventory data shows 5 cultural resource sites; none of which are eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Wildlife

The Drowsy Water assessment area offers wildlife habitat for populations of elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, lynx, raptors, coyote, porcupine, squirrels, chipmunks, sage grouse; and a variety of small birds and other small animals.

The Drowsy Water assessment area encompasses mapped moose, mule deer, and elk summer range (defined by that part of the overall range where 90 percent of the individuals are located between spring green-up and the first heavy snowfall). The assessment area includes CDOW-mapped winter range created for moose, mule deer, and elk winter concentration areas. CDOW-mapped elk winter concentration and elk severe winter range are within the assessment area. The area is also critical winter range for mule deer. The timbered portions of the assessment area provide habitat for the Northern goshawk, a BLM Sensitive Species.

A portion of the assessment area is within mapped lynx potential habitat (defined as those areas having the highest potential of lynx occurrences).

Scenery

The majority of the assessment area has been inventoried, and recognized, for its Class II scenery (which is to retain the existing character of the landscape). The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low.



Wilderness Character Assessment

Area 3 - Strawberry

Area Description

The Strawberry assessment area is located approximately 3 miles east of Granby, and 1 mile north of Tabernash. The area is bounded on the west and southwest by the Fraser River Canyon; on the west and north by private lands; and on the east by National Forest System lands.

Background

The Strawberry assessment area was included as part of the BLM's Initial Wilderness Inventory process in 1979 (BLM 1980). The area, identified as the Behler Creek Unit, was less than 5,000 acres in size; therefore, it was not carried forward as part of the intensive inventory. No map was included in the initial inventory documents; therefore, it is uncertain what the boundaries of the area were. It is assumed that the additional acres currently being assessed resulted from lands that were acquired since the 1980 inventory (acquired as the result of land exchanges with a private entity in 2000 and the State of Colorado in 2002; located in T2N, R76W, Section 36 and T1N, R76W, Section 36.) The original inventory also noted that timber management activities impacted the area's naturalness. The areas where timber management activities had occurred have been removed from the assessment area.

Landscape Characteristics and Issues

Land Ownership and Acreage

The Strawberry assessment area covers a total of 5,834 acres of BLM-managed public lands.

Topography

The topography consists of primarily steep slopes that drop into drainages flowing south and west into the Fraser River. Elevation ranges from 8,200 feet (along the Fraser River) to over 9,700 feet (on the high ridges in the northern part of the assessment area).

Vegetation

At the lower elevations, the vegetation includes open sagebrush slopes on the south to east facing slopes near the river, and lodgepole pine on the north and west facing slopes. The higher elevations are, predominately, lodgepole pine with intermixed aspen, blue spruce, and Douglas fir. Behler Creek, flowing from east to west, bisects the northern part of the assessment area. Riparian vegetation is present along the entire reach of the Behler Creek and Strawberry Creek drainages, as well as along several other springs and seeps within the assessment area.

Existing Issues

The Strawberry assessment area is a popular place for local residents to recreate. Recreation includes both motorized and non-motorized trail users. Adjacent to the southeast boundary of the assessment area (outside of the assessment area) is an established system of motorcycle trails. Conflicts exist between the motorized and non-motorized trail users, and between the motorized trail users and adjacent private property owners. Recent implementation of USFS Travel Management decisions that closed adjacent National Forest System lands to motorized use has increased these conflicts. The closing of adjacent National Forest System lands to motorized travel has also led to increased numbers of user-created trails on BLM-managed public lands. The increase in these trails has compounded the conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users within the assessment area.

The current MPB epidemic has impacted the lodgepole pine within the assessment area. Current BLM estimates suggest that 75 percent to 80 percent of the lodgepole pine within the assessment area are either dead, or will die, as a result of the epidemic.

Current Management Allocations/Prescriptions

Travel

The 1984 KFO RMP (BLM 1984b) designated the area as Open for cross-country motorized travel, with seasonal road closures for vehicles. While designated as Open in 1984, cross-country travel within the assessment area has not been an issue, due to steep terrain and existing vegetation. Under the 1988 Off Road Vehicle Implementation Plan (BLM 1988b), seasonal road closures were addressed, and the Strawberry area was identified as a deferred implementation area for designating routes. Additional lands acquired through land exchanges in 2000 and 2002 were designated as "Limited to Designated Routes." Limited time and resources have not allowed for travel management planning, or for the development of a designated route system, in the remainder of the assessment area.

Visual Resource Management

The 1984 RMP (BLM 1984b) did not designate VRM Classes. Visual resources have been managed in order to protect the Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) adopted as part of the 1984 KFO RMP. As part of the planning process for this DRMP/DEIS, the VRI has been updated. The entire assessment area has been inventoried as VRI Class II.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

There are no eligible WSR segments within the assessment area.

Recreation Activities and Recreation Setting Character Conditions

Currently, the assessed area offers excellent opportunities for primitive recreational activities, such as hunting, hiking, camping, photography, and horseback riding. The physical qualities of the landscape can be classified and mapped looking at a spectrum of RSCC Classes based upon distance from motorized and mechanized routes. Using existing KFO GIS Transportation

System data, the RSCC mapping shows 6 percent classified as back country; 40 percent classified as middle country; 30 percent classified as front country; and the remaining 24 percent classified as rural.

Livestock Grazing

Currently, livestock grazing occurs within 1 allotment (in the northern part of the assessment area). There are no known range improvements within the assessment area.

Realty and ROWs

Currently, there is 1 ROW within the assessment area (for a road that accesses private property in the northeast part of the area).

Oil and Gas Leasing

Currently, the area is open to leasing. There are no active leases within the assessment area. The entire area is mapped as “no potential” for oil and gas.

Minerals

The assessment area is open to mineral entry.

Water and Water Rights

The Strawberry assessment area contains portions of Fraser River, Behler Creek, and Strawberry Creek. There are several seeps within the area; however, there are none with decreed water rights. The assessment area is near Granby, and a tributary to the Fraser River; therefore, there is more water right activity than there is in some of the other assessment areas with diversions.

Strawberry Creek

Downstream of the private inholding on Strawberry Creek is the Vail Irrigation System Headgate Number 2. The headgate and ditch are privately owned and operated (taking water from Strawberry Creek, Meadow Creek, and Meadow Creek Reservoir). The owner, an irrigation company, has an agreement with the city of Englewood for 850 acre/feet (AF) of storage in Meadow Creek. Water from the reservoir, and from Meadow Creek, are transferred into Strawberry Creek upstream of the parcel. In multiple field visits, the ditch (Headgate Number 2) was diverting all of the available streamflow. The streambed below the structure ranges from totally dry to some ponded water. The ditch is in active use, with yearly maintenance. The berm on the south to west side of the ditch is fairly wide, allowing good access to the entire ditchline on BLM-managed public lands. The ditch was originally decreed for a 125 cfs conditional right (CA0183). In 1915, 10.32 cfs was changed to absolute (CA0259), and an additional 53.18 cfs in CA0772. In 84CW641, 40 cfs were abandoned, leaving 63.5 cfs absolute and 21.5 cfs conditional. In the 1991 court case, the applicant pled for the remaining conditional rights to be made absolute, as they had diverted 85 cfs. The case was protested, and the Judge ruled that diligence had not been proved; and the remaining 21.5 cfs was abandoned. Considering 34 years of records for the ditch, the ditch is, generally, turned on in May; and carries water through

to September (and, according to records, into the month of October for 18 years). The downstream segment has not been checked in the winter months in order to verify flows below the ditch. It appears that at least 1 other ditch right also uses the Vail Ditch to convey their water: the Rocky Ridge Ditch right. It appears that the Strawberry Ditch No. 1 and the Deberard Ditch are actually downstream of the boundary; but, even if inside, the water rights are no longer diverted. They are now used to offset diversions associated with Granby Ranch.

There are a number of well permits filed on BLM-managed public lands within the assessment area that are questionable. It is assumed that the reported well locations should have been filed under Range 76.5 West, rather than under 76 West. Those with listed Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) locations are also, most likely, in error, and are probably located within the private inholdings.

Name	Water Case	Adjudicated Date	Appropriated Date	Decreed Amount	Decreed Uses	Comments
Strawberry Creek Instream Flow	90CW0295	12/13/1990	11/27/1990	1 cfs (10/1-4/14) 2 cfs (4/1-9/30)	Instream Flow	From unnamed tributary to the Vail Ditch
Fraser River Instream Flow	90CW308B	12/31/1990	11/27/1990	19 cfs (9/16-5/14) 30 cfs (5/15-9/15)	Instream Flow	From Crooked Creek confluence to confluence with the Colorado River
Vail Irrigation System Headgate No. 2	CA0772 CA0259 CA0183 91CW0094 84CW0218	8/3/1911 8/3/1911 8/3/1911 8/3/1911 8/3/1911	9/22/1909 9/22/1909 9/22/1909 9/22/1909 9/22/1909	53.180 cfs 10.320 125.00 21.50 40.00	Irrigation	Current status of right: 63.5 cfs absolute. Thirty-four (34) years of diversion records show minimum flow of 15 cfs, maximum of 75-95 cfs
Rocky Ridge Ditch	CA0259 (86CW309)	3/18/1911	11/9/1909	4 cfs		Diverted into Vail Ditch,
Deberard Ditch (88)	CA0112 W1881	8/11/1906 8/11/1906	5/19/1891 5/19/1891	0.75 cfs 0.75 cfs		Used to irrigate pasture; now bypassed for Val Moritz Domestic Aug. Plan. Ditch appears to be just outside of boundary? 1 N, R. 76 W., Sec. 3 SWNWNE
Strawberry Ditch No. 1	CA0112 W1881	8/11/1906 8/11/1906	5/20/1891 5/20/1891	2.5 cfs 2.5 cfs		Used for irrigation; now used as bypass flow for Val Moritz Domestic Aug. Plan Ditch location? T. 1 N., R. 76 W., Sec. 2 SWNENW

The following well permits are on BLM-managed public lands; however, they appear to be in error.						
		Date Filed	Date Expires	Reported Yield	Use	Location
Well Permit	Permit #100688	1979		3 gpm	Domestic	Location: T 1N, R76W, Sec 2 SWNW UTM 4436699.1m, 426270.1 m ??Pole Creek Lot 12
Well Permit	Permit #277490					T. 1 N., R. 76 W., Sec. 24 NWSE 1600 ft. from South Line 2100 ft from East Line- Filing 2, Lot 30, Winter Park Highlands
		Date Filed	Date Expires	Reported Yield	Use	Location
Well Permit	Permit #94134 VE	1994		8 gpm	Domestic	T. 1 N., R. 76 W., Sec. 23 SWSE, Winter Park Highlands Lot 13
Well Permit	Permit #94234			18 gpm	Domestic	T. 1 N., R. 76 W., Sec. 1 NENE UTM: 4,437,081.6 m Northing 4288,952.1 m Easting
Well Permit	Permit #18009			10 gpm	Domestic	T. 1 N., R. 76 W., Sec. 1 NWNE UTM: 428,628.1 m Easting 4,437,081.6 m Northing

Road Maintenance

There are no roads within the assessment area receiving ongoing maintenance.

Topographic Maps

USGS 1:24,000 series topographic maps: Strawberry Lake, Granby

Findings for Strawberry

Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

Does the area contain wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation)?

**Yes.
Size**

Does the area have at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

Yes.

There have been timber management activities in the Strawberry assessment area since the 1960s; however, the areas impacted are not part of the assessment area boundary. The assessment area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. The impacts of the timber management activities have left the area adjacent to the assessment area impacted; however, such impacts would not be noticed unless a person was directly next to, or within, areas where the timber management activities occurred. There are opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Naturalness

Do the lands and resources exhibit a high degree of naturalness? Are the lands affected primarily by the forces of nature? Is the imprint of human activity substantially noticeable?

Yes.

The assessment area has retained a natural appearing landscape. The assessment area does not include areas where timber activities have occurred, and the remainder of the area has an unmodified landscape that has maintained its natural qualities. Non-maintained routes that are cherry-stemmed within the assessment area would not detract from the area's overall naturalness, unless a visitor was to directly cross them. The current impact to naturalness resulting from these routes is their width, and the evidence of motorized use. The routes have evidence of construction (cut/fill), but no record of maintenance. If a visitor is a short distance away from these routes, they would, most likely, not notice them. The west boundary of the assessment area is a railroad ROW that visitors to the area may hear, depending upon their location within the assessment area. However, the noise is fleeting, is not omnipresent, and would be limited due to the topography.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Outstanding Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Types of Recreation

Do visitors have outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation? Are the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people rare or infrequent? Can visitors feel isolated, alone or secluded from others? Is the use of the area primarily through non-motorized or non-mechanical means with no, or minimal, recreation

facilities?

Yes.

The Strawberry assessment area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude within the north and central portions of the area. The old logging routes adjacent to, and cherry-stemmed within, the assessment area are open for motorized travel; however, they occur, primarily, within timber; are, primarily, used during hunting seasons; and are not highly visible if a visitor is a short distance away from these routes. The topography of the area limits motorized or mechanized travel, primarily, to these routes that are considerably unnoticeable unless someone directly crosses them. Some ridges and areas offer vistas in open sage country; while other portions contain drainages with rugged landscapes, dense timber, and other vegetation where one would find isolation and seclusion. In conclusion, the assessment area's size, in conjunction with diverse topographic screening, dense timber, and other vegetation, provide visitors outstanding opportunities for solitude where one could find isolation and be secluded from others.

Physical qualities of the landscape are important to producing opportunities for primitive and unconfined types of recreation. Within the assessment area, the diverse topography and vegetation consists of dense forests and aspen stands, and offers visitors challenging and primitive recreational experiences, such as hunting, hiking, horseback riding, fishing, camping, wildlife viewing, and photography. Portions of the assessment area were mapped as front country and rural; however, the physical qualities remoteness mapping does not take into consideration the topographic vertical relief of the drainages. The topography of the area physically separates impacts, and the landscape reflects a more primitive classification. The adjacent National Forest System lands are designated as Management Prescription 1.3 "Backcountry Recreation," which emphasizes non-motorized recreational opportunities, augmenting those found within the assessment area. Within the assessment area, there are no recreation developments or marked trails; and signs and visitor controls are very minimal.

Supplemental Values

Ecological

The assessment area contains the Road End Seep at Strawberry Creek PCA, and a portion of the Behler Creek PCA, both proposed by the CNHP for their biodiversity significance. The CNHP also noted that the site provides other values, including aesthetics and open space. In addition, the area is an important wildlife habitat, providing a year-round water source and lush vegetation.

Geological

Fraser Canyon, located within the assessment area, has examples of Interbasin Canyon Erosion Fault Blocks that are not found elsewhere in the Fraser Valley vicinity. These examples can provide educational opportunities.

Scenery

The assessment area has been inventoried, and recognized, for its Class II scenery (which is to

retain the existing character of the landscape). The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low.

Cultural

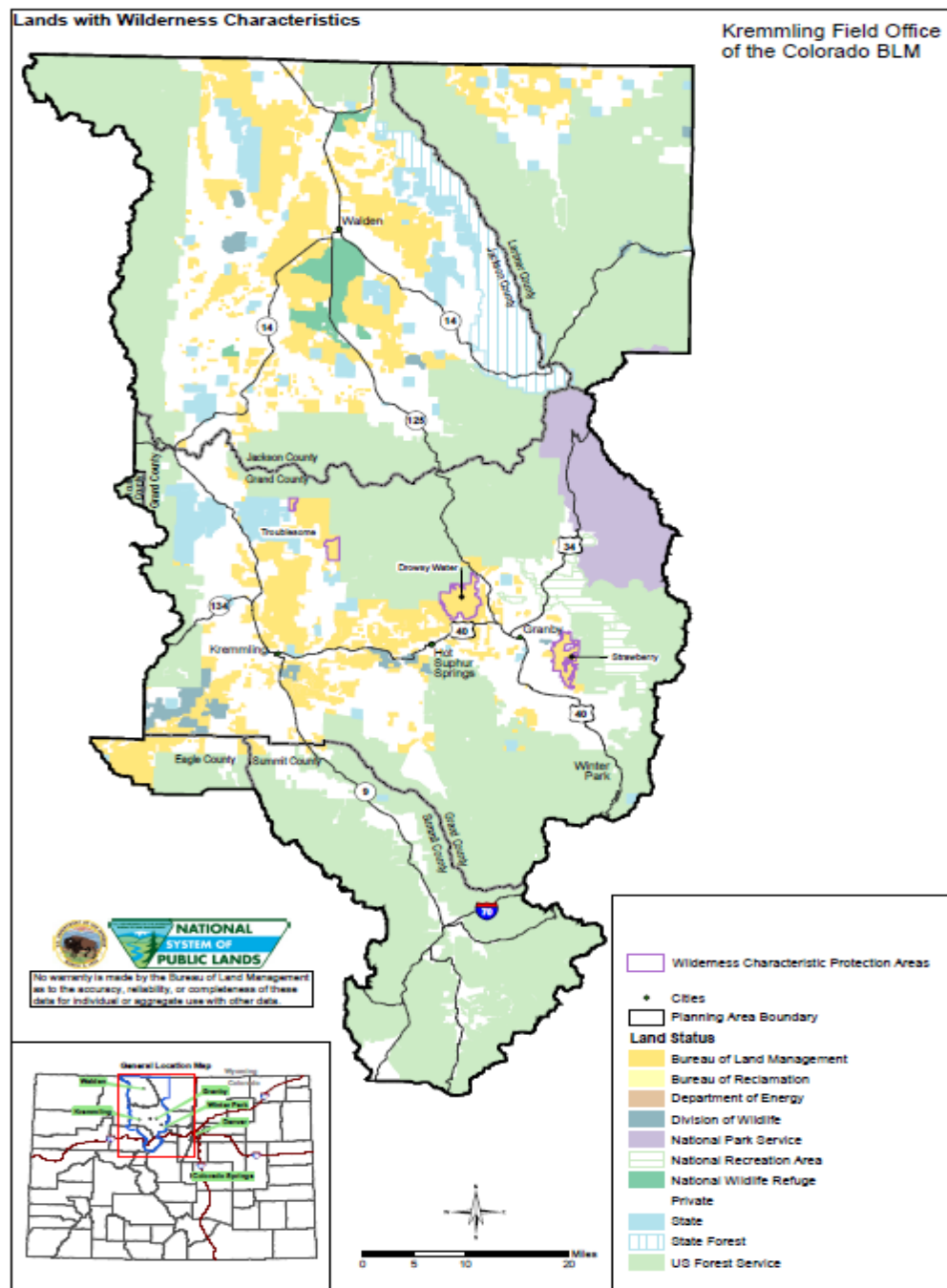
Limited inventory has occurred within the assessment area. BLM Cultural Resource Inventory data shows 3 cultural resource sites; 1 site is eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Wildlife

The Strawberry assessment area offers wildlife habitat for populations of elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, lynx, raptors, coyote, porcupine, squirrels, chipmunks, sage grouse; and a variety of small birds and other small animals. The 1984 KFO RMP (BLM 1984b) identified the land use priority within the assessment area for wildlife, where public lands are committed to important wildlife habitat.

The Strawberry assessment area encompasses mapped moose, mule deer, and elk summer range (defined by that part of the overall range where 90 percent of the individuals are located between spring green-up and the first heavy snowfall). The assessment area includes CDOW-mapped critical winter range created by combining Data Analysis Units (DAUs) for mule deer winter concentration areas, severe and critical winter range. CDOW-mapped elk winter concentration, and elk severe winter range, are found within the assessment area. The timbered portions of the assessment area provide habitat for the Northern goshawk, a BLM Sensitive Species.

A portion of the assessment area is within mapped lynx potential habitat (defined as those areas having the highest potential of lynx occurrences).



Management and Setting Prescriptions for Areas with Wilderness Characteristics

The following Setting and Management Prescriptions are intended to protect the values associated with wilderness character, including naturalness, primitive recreation, solitude, scenic areas, wildlife habitat, riparian areas, cultural resources, economic benefits resulting from recreation, desirability as a place to live, quality of life, custom/culture, and balanced use.

Activities

The following activities should not occur within lands having wilderness characteristics:

- construction of new permanent or temporary roads;
- use of motorized vehicles, or mechanical transport, off of designated routes;
- construction of new structures, developments, or installations; and/or
- authorization of new commercial enterprises.

The following activities are allowed within lands having wilderness characteristics, as appropriate, depending upon the character of an individual area:

- managing fire, insects, weeds, and diseases;
- completing recurring Federal mineral surveys;
- continuing established livestock grazing;
- allowing for commercial services, to the extent necessary, in order to provide for activities that are proper for realizing recreational or other wilderness character purposes; and that are compatible with the defined values; and/or
- allowing for adequate access to inholdings.

Valid Existing Rights

Specific exemptions/allowances made for valid existing rights may continue. New discretionary uses that create valid existing rights are not allowed if they would detract from the wilderness values.

Administrative Activities

New commercial activities, or new permanent roads, will not be authorized. The BLM may authorize other prohibited uses, if considered necessary in order to administer and protect the lands with wilderness character, and in order to protect public health and safety.

Emergencies

Within areas managed in order to maintain wilderness characteristics, the use of motor vehicles and mechanical transport, and the construction of temporary roads, structures, and installations, would be allowed for emergency purposes. However, such activities must be conducted in a manner designed to result in the least disturbance, and areas must be reclaimed as soon as possible.

Land Disposals, ROWs, and Use Authorizations

- lands with wilderness characteristics will be retained in public ownership. They will not be disposed of through any means, including public sales, exchanges, patents under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (RPPA), or through other actions.
- Valid existing rights, such as leases under the RPPA, leases/permits (under 43 CFR 2920), and ROWs may continue. These could be renewed if they are still being used for their authorized purpose.
- The BLM will acquire State and private inholdings, or adjacent lands, when practicable. In unique situations, and subject to public review, exchanges may be made involving Federal and non-Federal lands when such action would significantly benefit that area's wilderness characteristics.
- New authorizations, leases, permits, and ROWs will not be authorized.

Routes of Travel

The construction of new permanent or temporary routes or roads will not be allowed. No cross-country motorized or mechanized travel will be allowed within areas managed in order to maintain wilderness characteristics. However, motorized or mechanized use of pre-existing travel routes deemed necessary for transportation, and designated in the Approved Plan, will be allowed, subject to applicable prescriptions or stipulations. Motorized and mechanized routes must be minimized, and closure and restoration of unnecessary routes will be prioritized in order to enhance and protect wilderness characteristics. Any motorized or mechanized use off of designated routes will not be allowed.

Energy and Minerals

Locatable Minerals

Within areas managed in order to maintain wilderness characteristics, existing and new mining operations will be regulated, in accordance with 43 CFR 3809, in order to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the lands.

Leasable Minerals

Within areas managed in order to maintain wilderness characteristics, existing mineral leases represent a valid existing right. These rights are dependent upon the specific terms and

conditions of each lease. Existing leases will be regulated in order to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation. No new leases will be issued.

Livestock Grazing

Within areas managed in order to maintain wilderness characteristics, existing livestock grazing, and the activities and facilities that support a grazing program, are permitted to continue. Adjustments in the numbers and kind of livestock permitted to graze would be made as a result of revisions in the Approved Plan. Consideration is given to range condition, and to the protection of the range resource from deterioration. The construction of new grazing facilities would be permitted, if they are primarily for the purpose of protecting wilderness characteristics and more effective management of resources, rather than to accommodate increased numbers of livestock. The use of motorized equipment for emergency purposes is allowed.

Wildland Fire Management

Within areas managed in order to maintain wilderness characteristics, wildland fire management will be consistent with the current Fire Management Plan (FMP).

Forest/Vegetation Health

Within areas managed in order to maintain wilderness characteristics, insects, disease, and invasive species may be controlled, if such actions are deemed necessary in order to meet the minimum requirements of managing and protecting these lands. In addition,

- insect and disease outbreaks must not be artificially controlled, except in order to protect timber or other valuable resources outside of the land with wilderness characteristics, or in special instances when the loss to resources may result in adverse impacts to wilderness characteristics;
- vegetative manipulation designed to control noxious, exotic, or invasive species is allowed when there is no effective alternative, and when the control is necessary in order to maintain the natural ecological balances within the area. Treatments may include manual, chemical, and/or biological treatment(s), provided that such treatment(s) will not result in adverse impacts to the wilderness characteristics.

Recreation

Primitive and unconfined recreational uses, such as hiking, camping, rock climbing, caving, fishing, hunting, and trapping, are allowed on these lands. Recreational uses will not be allowed if they require:

- motor vehicles or mechanical transport (such as mountain bikes) off of routes designated as Open or Limited through the route designation process; and/or

- permanent structures or installations (other than tents, tarpaulins, temporary corrals, and similar devices for overnight camping). New commercial services will not be allowed unless they are necessary for realizing the primitive and unconfined recreational values (an example of an allowed commercial service would be an outfitting and guide service);

In addition:

- existing commercial recreational authorizations may be allowed to continue, under existing terms and conditions, to their expiration date;
- no competitive events would be authorized; and
- recreational or hobby collecting of mineral specimens, when conducted without location of a mining claim, may be allowed. (This use, however, will be limited to hand collection and detection equipment.)

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Cultural and paleontological resources are important supplemental values to an area's wilderness characteristics; therefore:

- Cultural Resource Inventories, studies, and research involving surface examination may be permitted if they benefit wilderness values. This same standard applies for the salvage of archeological and paleontological sites.
- Rehabilitation, stabilization, reconstruction, and restoration work on historic structures; excavations; and extensive surface collection may also be permitted if they maintain the area's wilderness character.
- Permanent physical protection (such as fences) will be limited to those measures needed in order to protect resources eligible for the listing on the NRHP, and will be constructed in a manner designed to minimize impacts on apparent naturalness.

Wildlife Management

Fish and wildlife resources are special features that contribute to an area's wilderness character. Whenever possible, these resources should be managed in order to maintain that character. Nothing will be construed as affecting the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the State agencies with respect to fish and wildlife management on these lands.

- Fishing, hunting, and trapping are allowable activities on these lands. The State establishes regulations and enforcement for these uses.
- Stocking of wildlife and fish species native to the area may be permitted. The introduction of Threatened, Endangered, or other Special Status Species native to North America may be allowed.
- Management activities on these lands will emphasize the protection of natural

processes.

- Management activities will be guided by the principle of doing the minimum necessary in order to manage the area in order to preserve its natural character.

Visual Resource Management

The areas shall be managed under VRM Class I